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One of the evils of newspaper criticism is, that it awakens in young artistes a contemptuous spirit for established models, without giving or increasing in them a creative power, so that they are led away into the many bye-paths, through which we see so many modern composers straying. The works of great masters are described as "worn-out," and therefore neophytes endeavor at all events to "form a new era," or "strike out a new path." When Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven created their masterpieces, no newspaper critics existed, or at any rate, critical voices did not scream simultaneously from fifty different quarters. What these composers became, they became by their own talent, and by the study of great works. *These* do not contradict themselves; in these nothing leads astray; from these alone we can learn sure rules for producing what is true and beautiful, classical and effective. Only by following great masters, can a disciple raise himself to mastership. "But," you will say, "surely a young, inexperienced artiste, if led by the sincere criticisms of experienced, well-learned men, will sooner penetrate into the beauties of masterpieces; he will feel more assured in his studies, and will sooner attain his aim." Certainly, I answer, if we possessed musical works, such as Winkelmann's on pictorial art, or Lessing on the drama, I should advise you to read and study them,—but even these, not too soon, for they shew at once the gigantic difficulties of real Art, and might intimidate the scholar in his still feeble efforts; but we have not such works in musical literature. Some excellent articles may be found dispersed among *former* musical journals, which are difficult to obtain. In modern times, *one* work has appeared which excels in profound and shrewd judgment, and for knowledge and impartiality surpasses everything which has been written on music; I mean the Biography of Mozart and the analysis of his works, written by the Russian Oubilichef. The perusal of this book is advisable for young artistes, and for the music-loving public, as in it, Mozart's genius and art is discussed from every point of view, and we perceive, not only what his talent *is*, but also, *how* it became such. Beethoven's Biography, by Schindler, and memoirs of good masters, Haydn, &c., &c., should be read, for all of these contain much that is exciting, encouraging, and improving. All these composers, however great, and however enthusiastically extolled, are, after all, shewn to be mere men, who had to learn, and learned, and commenced with inferior attempts. We behold in them the natural course of cultivation, which many others may possibly follow. Such reading is profitable; but I say—"Away with all newspaper criticism."

MUSIC

AMONG THE POETS AND POETICAL WRITERS.

By MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

(Continued from page 348.)

THIS is a noble passage on the Public Voice :—

"In one sound when all men's voices join,
The music's tun'd, no doubt, by hand divine;
'Tis God alone speaks a whole nation's voice;
That is his public language."—*Cowley*.

"Loud voice the land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty."—*Wordsworth*.

He elsewhere speaks of

"hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue."—*Wordsworth*.

He describes a flow of oratory in elegant words :—

"Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats
Of birds, in leafy bower,
Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower."
Wordsworth.

"I heard loud merry voices come
Of children out at play;
The music of that human hum,
Is earth's first poet-lay.

It yields the notes that call me back
To many a kindred scene,
When my young steps and my young track
Were just as gay and green."—*Eliza Cook*.

"And my reverie waxed deeper, when on that mournful
ground,
Changing all the dream of Fancy, came a blithe rejoicing
sound,
Heard beneath the broken arches of the ruin* old and
grey—
Children's voices shrill and gleesome—children's voices at
their play.

And I caught those blessed home-words we are first to
learn, when speech
Seems a hard unsimple lesson, past the feeble power of
reach—
Mother, Father, Sister, Brother; through the silent air
they rung,
Lisp'd tones of sweetest music from a pure unguileful
tongue.

Tender tones, as old as hearts are! Would to God no
bitter change
Taught our lips a deadlier utterance, taught our souls a
bloodier range—
Filled affection's ancient source with hate, and sin, and
strife, and wrong—
Fixed the wrath-curse where in childhood sate the blessing
and the song.

Tender tones, as old as hearts are! Ere these crumbling
walls were built,
Closing round a tide of glory, closing round a tide of
guilt;
Since their wide majestic sternness crowned the work of
weary years,
Words like these have broke the silence to a thousand
alien ears.

* * * * *
So we parted; thence again I saw not once in church or
square
Their happy childhood-faces, though I sought them many
a where;
But their gentle voices linger yet, like music soft and
fine,
Deep within my heart's recesses, with old memories for a
shrine."—*Charles Hitchens*.

"Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."
Byron.

* The Colosseum at Rome.

"Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head."

Wordsworth.

"The valley rings with mirth and joy;
And, pleased to welcome in the May,
From hill to hill the echoes fling
Their liveliest roundelay."—*Wordsworth.*

"Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting cuckoo,
Giving her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar—
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are."—*Wordsworth.*

"Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen
Within thy aery shell,
By slow Meander's margin green,
And in the violet embroidered vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That liketh thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere!
So mayest thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all heaven's harmonies."

Milton.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- All communications must be authenticated by the proper name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. We would request those who send us country newspapers, wishing us to read particular paragraphs, to mark the passage, by cutting a slit in the paper near it. We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.*
- A Subscriber.—*The violin by Francisco Juliano, about which you enquire, is still for sale, with others by Stradivarius, Jacoba Stainer, George Amon, and Jannacius Gaglianus, and may be seen at 69, Dean Street. We know no more of the pedigree than is stated in the original advertisement.*
- E. P.—*We believe it would have puzzled Beethoven himself to find out from which of his works the tune you mention is taken. The fact is that hymn tunes are often so perverted from the original melody, that they can scarcely be recognized in their disguise.*

Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

BISHOP STORTFORD.—Mr. W. A. Boast gave an evening concert at the Assembly Rooms, on Friday, the 5th Dec., assisted by the following artists:—Miss Messent, Miss A. Manning, Miss Huddart, Mrs. Boast, Mr. Frank Bodda, and Herr Carl Deichmann, the celebrated violinist. The performance gave the highest satisfaction to a crowded audience.

DALSTON AMATEUR CHORAL UNION.—The members of this Society gave their sixth dress concert, to their friends, on Tuesday, the 9th December, at the Manor Rooms, Hackney, under the direction of Mr. William Cockell. The programme gave entire satisfaction to an audience numbering upwards of 650 persons.

TESTIMONIAL TO MRS. HOWELL.—No better evidence could possibly be afforded of the appreciation of Mrs. Howell's invaluable services to the Caermarthen Musical Society, for her gratuitous assistance at various local concerts, and her powerful influence in improving the musical taste of the town, than the spontaneous manner in which the public have contributed to the testimonial which was presented to her on the 17th of Dec., at the Public Rooms in Caermarthen. The testimonial consisted of a purse of 50 sovereigns. Mrs. Howell, in receiving the purse, appropriately acknowledged the kindness of her friends.

SKIPTON.—A concert was given here on Friday, the 5th December, by Mr. Watson, organist, at which the principal vocalists were Miss Crossland, Miss Charlesworth, Mr. Hargrave, and Mr. Mason. Mr. Watson presided at the pianoforte. The programme comprised some of the "gems" of secular music, and was very well performed.

BIRMINGHAM.—The Birmingham Festival Choral Society performed the *Messiah* on the 26th inst., at the Town Hall. The principal vocalists were Miss Messent, Madame Bassano, Mr. Wilbye Cooper, and Mr. H. Barnby. The band and chorus consisted of 250 performers. Mr. H. Hayward was leader; Mr. Stimpson, organist; and Mr. Stockley, conductor. The oratorio was performed in a most praiseworthy style.

BATH.—Mr. Costa's *Eli* was produced at the Assembly Rooms during the early part of December, with a band of fifty performers, and a chorus numbering eighty voices. This was a spirited undertaking of the lessee of the rooms, and it was rewarded by a large attendance. The only drawback was the absence of Mr. Sims Reeves, who had been engaged to sing the principal tenor part. Madame Rudersdorff and Miss Dolby were warmly applauded. The band was excellent; Mr. Philip J. Smith, of Bristol, was the conductor, and Mr. Salmon the principal violin. The choral singers deserved the highest praise.

PSALMODY REFORM.—GREENOCK.—On the 3rd of December, Mr. Hatley's course of lessons on Psalmody was brought to a close in the New Town Hall. Several elaborate pieces of music, including chorales and anthems, were sung with remarkable precision and power. Such a meeting may well encourage Mr. Hatley to proceed with his important labours in Psalmody reform.

MARYPORT.—A Charity Concert and Ball for the relief of the town was held on the 20th of November. The amateur singers, including Messrs. Hine, Minshaw, Gorley, Barnes, and Banks, who had been carefully exercised under the musical training of Messrs J. and W. B. Graham, acquitted themselves with great credit. The Messrs. Graham performed several duets upon the piano and flute, which were very much applauded; and by their kind and gratuitous assistance, they rendered essential service to the cause of charity.

WESTMINSTER AND PIMLICO AMATEUR CHORAL SOCIETY.—This Society gave their third performance of sacred and secular music in St. Mary's Schoolroom, Westminster, on the 11th of December. The programme included some excellent compositions, which were very ably performed. The Society is much indebted for its success to the exertions of the hon. secretary, Mr. Bower Marsh, and the conductor, Mr. Hallett Sheppard.